

good life guide

KIDS' TABLE

THE GIFT OF GRATITUDE

Mom-tested tricks that help children make a habit of writing thank-you notes

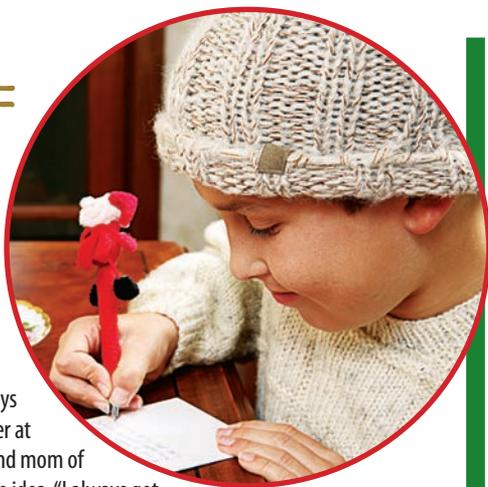
PREP IT Gather writing materials before the chaos of the holidays hits, says Mavis Butterfield, blogger at onehundreddollarsamonth.com and mom of two, who credits her mom with the idea. "I always got thank-you cards and stamps as one of my gifts," she says. "It was my mother's not-so-subtle way of providing me with the tools to get the job done."

TRACK IT "As your children open their gifts, write down who they're from and what the gifts were on the back of the gift tags before the gifts disappear," says Kelly Browne, mom of two, blogger at kellybrowne.net and author of *101 Ways to Say Thank You for Kids & Teens* (Cedar Fort).

SCHEDULE IT "Set aside a time where you can all sit down and write them," says Butterfield. "Make snacks, turn on music or a family favorite movie and get to work to make it fun and not completely painful."

DRAW IT If kids are too young to pen a note, let them express their gratitude through art. "If they want to draw a picture, that's even better because the drawings are one-of-a-kind treasures from your child's heart and imagination," says Browne.

—Solana Hawkenson



GET CRAFTY

NEW YEAR, NEW PLAN

Get ready for 2017 with this DIY calendar created by Alexa de Crispino, blogger at allthingspinkandpretty.com, that you can make in less than 20 minutes

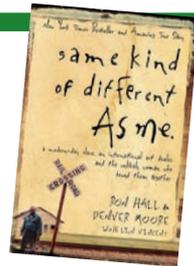
With a **permanent marker**, label 12 **gift tags** with the months of the year, and 12 more tags with the numbers 0 through 9, making two with 1 and 2. **Paint** a small **wooden box** and let dry. Use a **pencil** to mark three evenly spaced dots near the top, using the gift tags as your guide. Screw a **small hook** onto each pencil mark. Place the month tags on the first hook and number tags on the next two for the days.



UNDER THE TREE

HEARTWARMING READ

The true story of a friendship between an international art dealer and a homeless man is a timely reminder of the life-changing bonds between people, regardless of their differences. Share author Ron Hall's autobiographical *Same Kind of Different as Me* (Thomas Nelson)—soon to be a movie starring Jon Voight and Renée Zellweger—with the readers on your list this year.



WELLNESS WORKSHEET

HELP OTHERS
GET FIT
FIND NEW JOB
DRINK LESS
FIND LOVE
QUIT SMOKING
ENJOY LIFE
SAVE MONEY

WHY?

RESOLUTION SOLUTIONS

Avoid New Year's pitfalls with these ideas from life coaches Gretchen Hydo (anylengthslifecoaching.com) and Kate Swoboda (yourcourageouslife.com)

GET SET "Define your 'why,' your reason for wanting to make a change," says Hydo, who cautions that making vague goals because they sound good won't work. Spell out how reaching that goal will actually impact your life and the lives of those around you. Be specific.

HALT! Instead of just identifying things you want to do, make a "Stop Doing" list of the habits or actions that are impeding your goals, says Swoboda. Your list might include spending money on services you rarely use or staying up too late. A "don't"

list will often show you clearly what you do want, she says.

DO IT FOR YOU If you're resolving to do something because someone else thinks you should, you're unlikely to hang in there with it, says Hydo.

MAKE IT STICK Create new habits by developing a cue-routine-reward loop, says Swoboda. For example, if you want to get up early to exercise, the cue is your alarm clock, the routine is the exercise and the reward is feeling good about what you've done.

—Heather Donahoe

